

#EC-22
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SURFACE TRANSPORTATION BOARD

Washington, DC 20423

Office of Economics, Environmental Analysis, and Administration

July 21, 2003

Dr. Robert Fitzgerald
President
Medina County Environmental Action Association
202 CR 450
Hondo, TX 78861

**Re: STB Finance Docket No. 34284 – Southwest Gulf Railroad Company
– Construction and Operation Exemption – Medina County, TX –
Request to be Consulting Party under Section 106 of the National
Historic Preservation Act**

Dear Dr. Fitzgerald:

Thank you for your letter dated June 30, 2003. As you know, the Surface Transportation Board's Section of Environmental Analysis (SEA) is conducting an environmental review of Southwest Gulf Railroad Company's proposed rail construction and operation in Medina County, Texas, pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act and related environmental regulations, including the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA).

We appreciate your interest in our environmental review process and your request for the Medina County Environmental Action Association (MCEAA) to become a consulting party for the NHPA section 106 process. We have designated MCEAA as a section 106 consulting party for this proceeding and request that you provide us with the name and contact information for the individual who will act as the spokesperson for your organization throughout the section 106 process.

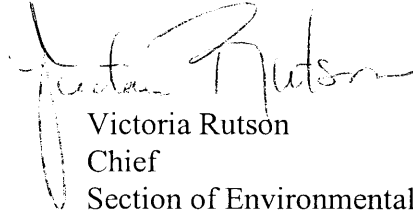
We encourage you to read the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation's regulations for implementing the section 106 process at 36 CFR Part 800. Pursuant to these regulations, although consulting parties participate throughout the section 106 process and work with all involved parties to try to resolve any issues, the concurrence of consulting parties in the final outcome of the section 106 process is not required. Furthermore, if a formal written agreement – such as a Memorandum of Agreement or a Programmatic Agreement – is prepared to mitigate any adverse effects, consulting parties are not necessarily invited to be signatories or concurring parties to the agreement.

If you have any information regarding historic and cultural resources that you would like to submit to us – I understand that your organization has prepared a map that identifies historic

resources in the area of the proposed rail construction – please feel free to do so. We welcome information from all sources throughout our environmental review process.

If you have additional questions about the section 106 process please do not hesitate to contact me or Rini Ghosh of my staff at (202) 565-1539.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Victoria Rutson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "V" and "R".

Victoria Rutson
Chief
Section of Environmental Analysis

cc: Pamela Opiela, Texas Historical Commission
Dr. Lynn Kitchen